

## CLAIMS

What is claimed is:

1. A method of managing CAD data in a plurality of disparate and diverse databases comprising:

providing a first database located in a first location and further being located behind a first firewall;

providing a second database located in a second location and further being located behind a second firewall;

providing a clearinghouse server located outside of said first firewall and said second firewall, said clearinghouse server having a clearinghouse database comprising an index to at least a portion of said CAD data in said first database and at least a portion of said CAD data in said second database;

providing a workstation located behind said first firewall, said workstation having a clearinghouse interface program;

establishing communications between said clearinghouse interface program with said clearinghouse server;

transmitting a request for a requested file from said clearinghouse interface program to said clearinghouse server;

determining that said requested file is located in said second database by using said clearinghouse database;

sending a request from said clearinghouse server to said second database for said requested file;

converting said requested file to a first transmittable format; and

transmitting said requested file from said second database in said first transmittable format.

2. The method of claim 1 wherein said workstation is a CAD workstation and said clearinghouse interface program is a plug-in application.
3. The method of claim 1 wherein said establishing communications between said clearinghouse interface program and said clearinghouse server comprises authenticating and authorizing said clearinghouse interface program.
4. The method of claim 1 further comprising:

converting said requested file from said first transmittable format to a  
first CAD format;

5 translating said requested file from said first CAD format to a second  
CAD format;

converting said requested file from said first CAD format to said second  
transmittable format;

transmitting said requested file to said first CAD station using said  
second transmittable format; and

10 converting said requested file from said second transmittable format to  
said second CAD format.

5. The method of claim 4 wherein said step of translating said requested file from  
said first CAD format to said second CAD format is performed by said  
clearinghouse server.

6. The method of claim 1 wherein said first transmittable format comprises XML.

7. A system for sharing files across disparate databases comprising:

a first server located behind a first firewall and connected to a first  
database that contains a first set of files;

5 a second server located behind a second firewall and connected to a  
second database that contains a second set of files;

a clearinghouse server located outside of said first firewall and said  
second firewall;

10 a clearinghouse database located on said clearinghouse server and having  
an index to at least a portion of said first set of files in said first database and  
at least a portion of said second set of files in said second database;

a workstation located behind said first firewall and having a  
clearinghouse interface program capable of interfacing with said  
clearinghouse database on said clearinghouse server, said clearinghouse  
interface program further capable of sending a request for a specific file  
15 indexed in said clearinghouse database;

said clearinghouse server further receives said request for said specific  
file from said workstation, determines that said specific file is located on said

second database, and sends said request for said specific file to said second server; and

20           said second server further receives said request for said specific file, locates said specific file in said second database, converts said specific file into a first transmittable format, and sends said specific file.

8. The system of claim 7 wherein said first database contains files in a first CAD format and said second database contains files in a second CAD format.

9. The system of claim 8 wherein said clearinghouse server is further adapted to:

receive said specific file;

convert said specific file from said first transmittable format to said second CAD format;

5           translate said specific file from said second CAD format to said first CAD format;

convert said specific file from said first CAD format into a second transmittable format; and

transmit said specific file to said workstation.

10. The system of claim 7 wherein said clearinghouse interface program comprises a plug-in application.

11. The system of claim 7 wherein said transmittable format comprises XML.